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Six Months Aint No Sentence
2015
Jim Leftwich
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Book 128

08.20.2015

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Jan Herman, on his book

The Z Collection: Portraits & Sketches

The title seems like a reference to "The X Files," but I had something else in mind: the hidden "Z closet" at Harvard's Houghton Library. An archivist once showed me its treasures concealed behind a locked door: Charles Dickens's screw-tipped walking stick, the one he used to protect himself from escaped convicts on the Romney Marshes; T.S. Eliot's straw boater; two locks of hair (William Wordsworth's and Nathaniel Hawthorne's). Adjacent to the closet behind another locked door was Emily Dickinson's entire writing room: the desk she worked at and the piano she played; the family portraits she looked at on the walls; her pinky ring and the wax sealing device she used to seal her letters; a sampler she cross-stitched as a child. Artifacts give history a physical presence, though we turn to dust. This collection is not a walking stick, a straw boater, a lock of hair, or a writing room. If it turns out to be an object worth keeping around, preferably on an open shelf, so much the better.

Consider it a time capsule made of words.

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PINNED POST

News Feed

Jim Leftwich

1 hr

a brief meditation on the notion of uselessness, from 2001. this group was created as part of the ongoing research, collective and collaborative, in and around these specific notions of useless writing. i haven't posted this essay in a while, but i have posted (and pinned) it here several times since i started the group. in a nutshell, i am saying "uselessness is not useless -- in fact it may be among the highest forms of usefulness."

Пројекат Растко: Jim Leftwich: Useless Writing Skills are acquired behaviors, similar to acquired tastes. They are learned behaviors valued by the dominant culture to the extent that it can use them....

RASTKO.RS 3 Likes

Like Comment

Share

Chris Bidle, Michael Dec and Olchar E. Lindsann like this.

Jim Leftwich

Useless Writing

Skills are acquired behaviors, similar to acquired tastes. They are learned behaviors valued by the dominant culture to the extent that it can use them. Different areas of the dominant culture value different skills. Skill is developed originally, jump-started if you will, through training, then honed, refined, through experience, through practice, the practice of the particular skill. One sets out to learn a skill, seeks out an expert in the field, and is trained by rote and through information until one has acquired the desired skill. It is the same whether one wishes to repair an automobile engine or write a sonnet, program a computer or paint a portrait. There is a hierarchy at work here, and those who reside at the highest levels do so due to their possession of a specialized knowledge and their mastery of its requisite activities: the arcanum and its secret gestures: the gnosis and its rites. Almost all of us can learn almost any skill if we desire to do so. All that is required is the desire and the work, the desire and the willingness to put in the time and put forth the effort to acquire the skill. All the skills that are taught, and the ways in which they are taught, are structurally necessary to the culture that teaches them, else they would not be taught. We should think of this usefulness as meaning only one thing: useful means useful to the dominant culture, always and only. That which is deemed useful is such only insofar as it reinforces the fundamental structure of the culture. The power relations that are structurally in place must remain structurally in place. Change is not only allowed, it is required, but only in the details of the larger pattern; the larger pattern of necessity must remain intact.

What happens if one desires to practice useless skills, skills that are not useful in maintaining the structure of the culture? First of all, one will not be able to acquire these skills in the usual manner. There will be no teachers provided by the culture; no training will be available. One's desire will of necessity need be nearly an obsession. The work, the time and effort required, may seem disproportionate to the desire. One will likely decide to pursue some other skill, to alter one's desire, to attune one's desire to those regarded as useful by the culture.

What happens if one persists in the pursuit of useless skills? It is unlikely that an entirely unforeseen activity will be invented, so one will work in the shadows of an already established tradition. But, at least at the outset, one will work alone, without guides or guidelines. The wheel will likely be reinvented accidentally and often. (Reinventing the wheel is useful in the pursuit of useless skills.) But the wheel is not a part of the desire, so it will be discarded — discarded not as useless, but as useful, therefore inappropriate to the pursuit. One trains by sorting and wandering, sifting, brooding, drifting, gathering and discarding, always discarding. This is a nomadic pursuit, not necessarily directionless or circuitous, but always everything but the steady

step along a straight and narrow path. This is the crooked path, and its passage is along the low road.

This autodidact will learn to do things that others have no desire to do, that others are not allowed to do, that others are not able to think of doing. This is obvious from the outside looking in, but only acknowledged by the dominant culture in moods of elitist condescension. The normative reaction of the dominant culture will be derision or a haughty indifference. Structural superiority, however, permits itself the privilege of praising from a position of ignorance. This is a method that attempts to appropriate the useless. A cursory glance at recent cultural history in America alone reveals several instances of this. There is only one way around this: if one is truly committed to the practice of useless skills, one must be constantly on guard against one's own tendencies towards usefulness.

Two useless skills:

- 1. private writing, by which I mean writing that has a strictly subjective significance for the writer. this writing may be appropriated by the dominant culture, i.e. published, sold, archived, studied, etc., but it cannot be known for what it is. a writer's disciplined practice of private writing can only be known as such by that writer. other knowledge concerning it will never be other than ancillary.
- 2. asemic writing, by which I mean writing that is shifted intentionally towards the unreadable, towards image, without discarding entirely all vestiges of either the letter or the line, and without assuming the alternative status of visual art. it is a hybrid writing, a writing not meant for a reading mingled with an imaging not meant for looking. it is a useless, mutant writing, its uselessness a mutagen for the writer.

3.12.01

На Растку објављено: 2007-11-21

Датум последње измене: 2007-11-21 20:36:30

Mjamj Snjirc

August 13 at 10:05am

post-asemic writing by mc (if you want to commission a yes - or si, ja, oui, evet, igen, da, ... - paper, feel free to pm me!)

Like Comment

Share

You, Mary Disney, Rylo Aates, Eugenia Di Meo and 42 others like this.

Mjamj Snjirc

August 13 at 10:05am · Like · 5

Spencer Selby I'd say more pre-asemic ala vispo. Perhaps you mean this as a joke or as a critical comment. To me it's still vispo. And who is mc?

August 14 at 3:02pm · Like · 3

Mjamj Snjirc yes spencer, i thought it quite funny. but as funny goes, it is both critical and serious. i call it post-asemic, because its concern is (not the deconstruction, but) the reconstruction of the semantic property of language. and i call it writing, because evidently it is writing.

i am mc.

August 14 at 4:33pm · Edited · Like · 3

Rylo Aates One of them post post-literature posts then? - Like these a lot, really quite chuffed to get mine and that you took the time to do it.

August 15 at 2:40am · Like · 2

Mjamj Snjirc yes! & smile emoticon

August 15 at 7:54am · Like · 1

Mjamj Snjirc

August 15 at 7:55am · Like · 2

Rylo Aates smile emoticon

August 15 at 10:41am · Like · 1

Peggy Clem Gooday I am enjoying its beauty, however, it is quite autistic. Beautiful.

August 15 at 11:18am · Edited · Like

Peggy Clem Gooday Spencer, I agree it is vispoesque, however, MC's explanation satisfies.

Intriguing argument.

August 15 at 11:57am · Like

Mjamj Snjirc Quite autistic, Peggy Clem Gooday? can you elaborate?

August 15 at 4:21pm · Like

Jim Hoffman Autistic or artistic?

August 15 at 7:33pm · Like · 2

Peggy Clem Gooday I'm sorry, I meant to write "ARTISTIC"!

August 16 at 10:05am · Like

Mjamj Snjirc As far as I'm concerned no need to be sorry Peggy - nothing 'wrong' with being called autistic.

August 16 at 10:31am · Like · 2

Spencer Selby So MC is you Mjamj? I'm sorry, I no longer follow or even update my own blog.

Where is this explanation you refer to?

August 17 at 2:12pm · Like

Mjamj Snjirc I think the answers are in this thread Spencer, or else I don't understand your questions.

August 17 at 3:40pm · Like

Spencer Selby Yes, I see now the comment explaining all that I missed. My only question is, reconstruction from what? Do you feel you were doing asemic before? If not then why reconstruction?

August 17 at 3:43pm · Like

Mjamj Snjirc Reconstruction from the effects of the deconstruction of language, that has been going on in the last century (from Dada to Derrida). Imv this deconstruction is a 'logical' effect of the materialistic approach of language. And in the the materialistic approach of language the communicative value of language becomes very elusive. I see asemic writing as a means of bypassing the degraded state of the communicative value of language (and only occasionally succeeding) and I see the reconstruction of the semantic property of language as a necessary operation to eventually reclaim the beauty and the riches of language as a means of communication (or of truthful expression, if you will).

August 17 at 5:01pm · Like · 2

Mjamj Snjirc (So no Spencer, groups with names as 'Useless Writing' or 'Bad Poetry' are not my kind of funny.)

August 18 at 2:47am · Like

Mjamj Snjirc grin emoticon gri

August 18 at 2:49am · Edited · Like

Mjamj Snjirc Missing the comments again Spencer?

11 hrs · Like

Mjamj Snjirc grin emoticon grin emoticon grin emoticon grin emoticon grin emoticon 24 mins · Like

Jim Leftwich i don't think i have seen the expression "post-asemic writing" before. but now that i see it it has the look of an inevitability. everyone who has ever had any interest in asemic writing should welcome this. the next phase of the anti-movement is here.

1 min · Like

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08.22.2015

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Rylo Aates Do everything with a hammer, But make sure you've broken it first, For of all the mistakes you can make in your life Not knowing yer tools is the worst.

10 hrs · Like · 1

Mjamj Snjirc Some additional information from Jim Leftwich, posted (and pinned) in the group 'Useless Writing', which I mentioned some comments earlier.

"a brief meditation on the notion of uselessness, from 2001. this group was created as part of the ongoing research, collective and collaborative, in and around these specific notions of useless writing. i haven't posted this essay in a while, but i have posted (and pinned) it here several times since i started the group. in a nutshell, i am saying "uselessness is not useless -- in fact it may be among the highest forms of usefulness."

6 hrs · Like

Mjamj Snjirc grin emoticon grin emoticon

6 hrs · Like

Rylo Aates Are you 2 agreeing or arguing?

4 hrs · Like

Jim Leftwich i am agreeing

1 hr · Like

Spencer Selby For me deconstruction and reconstruction are like yin and yang, we need them both and always have. The most interesting, creative poetry (often called experimental, innovative, etc) and the most interesting work in other art forms has always been (at least in the last 100 plus years) both destructive and constructive, balancing both poles. Nothing new about that at all to me.

15 mins · Like

Jim Leftwich asemic writing is more interesting to me now that it has led to something called post-asemic writing. the concept of asemic writing needed this development. it is a very welcome breath of fresh air.

8 mins · Like

Spencer Selby Does this mean that you no longer feel the need to supply or substitute yr own label, as you had done with pansemic, Jim? I personally don't get the fascination with any of these labels. I have stated this in many different contexts. Even recently I have resisted the allure and/or significance of labels affixed to art in several other creative groups I participate in--New Aesthetic, Glitch Art....

17 mins · Like

Jim Leftwich i started using the word pansemic about 12 years ago. it was important to me then, but i'm no longer quite so strongly attached to it. for a lot of folks it's a relatively new notion, or at least a relatively new word. i've used it a lot, and thought about it a lot, and frankly i've grown a little tired of it (or maybe i just don't have much energy to put towards its defense). i still get a lot of energy out of the notion of asemic writing, in all of its permutations. i still use it as a kind of writing-against-itself. it's a very generative concept. it is also a lot of fun -- to do, to think about, and even at times to write about. i'm going to continue to have fun with it. i would like to think that everyone involved with it will do the same.

1 min · Like

Spencer Selby I must admit I don't quite see where you're coming from, Jim. First you say "asemic writing is more interesting" when "post" is added to the term. Then you say asemic without the post added has increasingly inspired you, more than the term you insisted on for many years. I'm all for fun and I think I've been as motivated as anyone in recent years to create work using asemic label or conceptional dynamic as a prompt. But for me the work itself, the act of creation is what's important and fun. Any decent work of art is unique so giving it a generic label is always going to be problematic. "A characteristic feature of conceptual creatings is that they have no other limit than the plane they happen to populate, and this plane is itself limitless, the space of a measureless creation."--Deleuze

9 mins · Like

Jim Leftwich asemic writing is part of what i do as a poet, the idea of pansemia came out of that process, as i gradually became convinced that there is no such thing as asemic writing (which, as i have said elsewhere, is not a reason to quit working on it), for me, post-asemic writing will fit in quite nicely on this continuum, the notion can continue to evolve as a kind of writing-against-itself, without the danger of becoming any kind of visual art.

Just now · Like

Spencer Selby I can understand that you're evolving, I get that (and can certainly identify with it since some sort of evolving has been for me an absolute necessity, or a necessary byproduct of my creative work for decades). But you seem very hemmed in by some of these categories, Jim. I mean, "danger of becoming any kind of visual art"? Are you serious? There is no danger to

that. The only danger to that that I can even imagine would be if one was overly programmatic in relation to all creative work.

8 mins · Edited · Like

Jim Leftwich yes, i know this is what you think about the relationship of asemic writing to visual art. we don't agree on this. i'm ok with that.

Just now · Like

Spencer Selby Me too. We can agree to disagree. I don't need to have a big argument with you, Jim, certainly not here at FB late at night. I was just honestly surprised at some of the things you said. That is why I reacted as strongly as I did.

11 hrs · Like

Jim Leftwich i've known you for over 20 years, Spencer. you don't have to be easy going, or easy to get along with. i've never cared about any of that. we're both opinionated, damn the torpedoes. just keep on doing what you do and i'll keep on paying attention to it. i don't care whether i agree with any of it or not.

11 hrs · Like

Mjamj Snjirc grin emoticon grin emoticon

6 hrs · Like

Mjamj Snjirc I am not the arguing kind Rylo; I don't feel the urge to and I don't see the use of it. Every now and again I am called to clarify my position, and then - it being such a rare treat - it is uplifting if this is met with a positive response (in whatever variety) and - it being all too common - it is boring if this is met with a negative response (in whatever variety). But, the communicative value of language being as it is, both positive and negative are very relative. This said, I do very much agree with Jim Leftwich's position as worded in the comments above and as worded in the essay from 2001, that he posted in his group 'Useless Writing'. I differ however, in that I never much cared for the authority of the dominant establishment, and so would never label my activities with a description in which the value-judgement of an alien order is reflected.

6 hrs · Unlike · 1

Mjamj Snjirc Spencer: in my reality reconstruction and deconstruction of cultural patterns belong to a plane that is ruled by time, and yin and yang (as creation and destruction, as choas and order) belong to a plane in which timelessness rules.

6 hrs · Like

Mjamj Snjirc btw :: I reread the Wiki-article on asemic writing and imo the absence of Jim Leftwich's definition - as I found it in the essay I mentioned - is a big omission. Here it is :: "asemic writing, by which I mean writing that is shifted intentionally towards the unreadable, towards image, without discarding entirely all vestiges of either the letter or the line, and without assuming the alternative status of visual art. it is a hybrid writing, a writing not meant for a reading mingled with an imaging not meant for looking. it is a useless, mutant writing, its uselessness a mutagen for the writer." (2001)

6 hrs · Like

Rylo Aates I kinda thunk as much regarding the arguing and aye on the use of useless too but i think that follows given i mix with folk who are treated as if they are. But then the essay perhaps deals with some of that.

6 hrs · Like · 1

Mjamj Snjirc that follows yes & the essay yes

4 hrs · Like

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08.23.2015

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from WeenieCampbell.com
Preserving Country Blues through Education, Performance and Technology

cru423

Member Posts: 45 Howdy!

Jack of Diamonds

« Reply #53 on: March 11, 2013, 09:03:31 PM » This is off the Arhoolie recordings. I believe this is originally a song about the card game Coon Can, or gin rummy.

Jack of Diamonds

Well I played him end of spring And he never won a thing

Jack of Diamonds was a hard card to play

Well I played him end of fall And he never won at all

Jack of Diamonds was a hard card to play

I fell down on my knees Tried to play Jack of Spades

Jack of Diamonds was a hard card to play

Well I played him 'gainst the ace He was a starvation in my face Jack of Diamonds was a hard card to play

Well I played him 'gainst the deuce pulled a jack when it weren't no use

Jack of Diamonds was a hard card to play

Well I played him 'gainst the tre It was on ??it a fiver lay??

Jack of Diamonds was a hard card to play

And I played the jack 'gainst the four Turned the jack's red indigo

Jack of Diamonds was a hard card to play

I played him 'gainst the five That Abe Lincoln made me cry

Jack of Diamonds was a hard card to play

And I played him 'gainst the six It left me in a terrible fix

Jack of Diamonds was a hard card to play

And I told you last week
Just as plain as a man could speak
I'm gonna send you to your proper pay day

And I played the jack 'gainst the king And it made the deal sing

Jack of diamonds was a hard card to play

And I played it 'gainst the queen And it turned my money green

Jack of diamonds was a hard card to play

Logged

cru423

Member Posts: 45 Howdy!

Jack of Diamonds

« Reply #54 on: March 11, 2013, 09:49:30 PM »

In the 5th and 7th verses, after listening to another live recording on youtube, I'm switching to "lay". Instead of imagining the money he will win is already in his hand. He is contrasting "play", to hold the hand, with "lay", to put down the hand.

5th verse:

I played the jack 'gainst the tre It was only a five to lay

7th verse:

I played the jack 'gainst the five That lay likely (lay length/meld length) make/made me cry

Any other suggestions? Logged

banjochris

Member Posts: 1592

Re: Mance Lipscomb Lyrics

« Reply #55 on: March 12, 2013, 09:03:11 AM »

It's "fiver lay" and "lay like to made me cry" -- also in the verse about "pay day" it's "send you to your papa pay day" (which is a pretty common blues lyric.

The game that the song is about is Monte, which is sort of a relative of Faro, but there was a "layout" of cards to bet against:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monte_Bank

Chris

Logged

cru423

Member Posts: 45 Howdy!

Re: Mance Lipscomb Lyrics

« Reply #56 on: March 12, 2013, 02:56:21 PM »

I just found a whole thread on this forum devoted to discovering what game it was. I don't think we'll know. The reason why I thought it was coon-can, was because the high cards like jack of diamonds are hard to finally get rid of as deadwood. And you can't have over ten points in your hand before you lay or throw down your cards (at least in gin rummy). So the meaning in that case would be, "Jack of Diamonds is hard card to finally throw down".

Yet it begs the question, if this player is pulling cards out of the deck in serial order, 1,2,3,...6...why does pulling a 6 leave him in a terrible fix? He's got two melds and a possible third on the way. Earlier in the song, "Only a 5 to lay" could mean that he has two melds already in his hand and he needs to pull one more five to lay/throw down his hand. Then he pulls a 4, and he figures he will more likely make a run out of 4,5,6, so he discards a 5 AND also pulls a 5 out of the deck. That's why the "lay length" makes him cry at this point, because he just ruined what would have been a perfectly good meld for a dubious one. Then he pulls a six and the theory seems to be lost, because he's in a terrible fix with two melds. Although, isn't that what singing blues is about? This isn't a card game, it's poetry, so... To cap off this game, when he gets the third meld, he then discards one of the two fives he has, and only has one five left over.

Like I said, monte could also be the game, as it says in the liner notes of the Arhoolie album. It would then make since to have a "fiver" or a "five-spot" on the lay-out. I'll have to do some more research and listen to more versions before I'm sold.

Papa pay day? Could you list some songs that have this verse in it? I know Mississippi John Hurt sings about Mama payday. What an interesting post! thanks chris!

Logged

di

Global Moderator Member Posts: 2608 Howdy!

Re: Mance Lipscomb Lyrics

« Reply #57 on: March 12, 2013, 03:04:37 PM » Quote

Yet it begs the question, if this player is pulling cards out of the deck in serial order, 1,2,3,...6...why does pulling a 6 leave him in a terrible fix?

Because the song demanded a word to rhyme with "six".

Don't over-intellectualize this stuff.

Seriously, there's nothing in the song that indicates that the cards were actually played in the order they're sung. The singer could be talking about separate instances in multiple games. « Last Edit: March 12, 2013, 03:08:19 PM by dj » Logged

cru423

Member Posts: 45 Howdy!

Re: Mance Lipscomb Lyrics

« Reply #58 on: March 12, 2013, 04:05:27 PM » yeah, you're right, as a game it doesn't make sense unless we all agree that there were so many games of faro, played coincidentally, or remembered in sequence. But as a folksong it's a structural masterpiece. That's why I spend so much time with this.

You know, I was just thinking, intelexualizing if you will . One of the biggest problems or shall I say "mysteries" about this way of looking at it is (and it's a popular view since the wikipedia stub on this song mentions that it is about a game of coon can), besides what I've already mentioned:

If (during the same game of coon can) on the deuce he pulls another jack of another suit when it doesn't matter, and on the next turn he pulls a tre and only needed a five to win, that would mean that he has pulled a third jack, between moves two and three, skipping this move over in the verse. He then later substitutes the queen and the king for those two jacks to complete the verse. So why is there such a slight of hand (in the song) at this point? Probably because he is talking about casino/saloon games where cardsharping was notorious. In a song like this "slide of hand" is also most deceptive.

Logged

cru423

Member Posts: 45 Howdy!

Re: Mance Lipscomb Lyrics

« Reply #59 on: March 12, 2013, 04:59:16 PM » Hey has anyone ever listened to Butterbeans and Susie's "Deal Yourself Another Hand"? I'm convinced that no matter what game they're talking about, it all boils down to this:

The Jack that's three-card Charlie, and he's using me for a goat The Queen that's you sweet mama, also trying to cut my throat The King that's Papa Butterbeans and he's gonna wear the crown So be careful y'all ain't broke when the deal goes down

They're playing a three-handed whist in this song. The fact that the ace was a "starvation" in the Lipscomb song makes me think it's also a reference to whist (spades or hearts) where it is possible to play backwards in a misere contract, so that the party with the most tricks loses instead of wins. The ace would be the least valuable card instead of the highest (in a game like coon can or faro it doesn't matter).

Jack of Diamonds

Well I played him in the spring
And he never won a thing
Jack of Diamonds was a hard card to play

Well I played him in the fall
And he never won at all
Jack of Diamonds was a hard card to play

I fell down on my knees

Tried to play Jack of Spades

Jack of Diamonds was a hard card to play

Well I played him 'gainst the ace
He was a starvation in my face
Jack of Diamonds was a hard card to play

Well I played him 'gainst the deuce pulled a jack when it won't no use Jack of Diamonds was a hard card to play

Well I played him 'gainst the tre
It was on a fiver lay
Jack of Diamonds was a hard card to play

And I played the jack 'gainst the four Turned the jack's red indigo [?]
Jack of Diamonds was a hard card to play

I played him 'gainst the five That lay like to made me cry Jack of Diamonds was a hard card to play

And I played him 'gainst the six It left me in a terrible fix Jack of Diamonds was a hard card to play

And I told you last week
Just as plain as a man could speak
I'm gonna send you to your papa pay day

And I played the jack 'gainst the king And it made the dealer sing Jack of Diamonds was a hard card to play

I played him 'gainst the queen
And he turned my money green
Jack of Diamonds was a hard card to play

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08.27.2015

Cole Swensen

Introduction to American Hybrid: A Norton Anthology of New Poetry

"The rhizome is an appropriate model, not only for new Internet publications, but also for the current world of contemporary poetry as a whole. The two-camp model, with its parallel hierarchies, is increasingly giving way to a more laterally-ordered extensive network composed of intersections, or hubs, that branch outward toward smaller hubs, which themselves branch outward in an intricate and ever-changing structure of exchange and influence. Some hubs may be extremely experimental, and some extremely conservative, but many of them are true intersections of these extremes, so that the previous adjectives—well-made, decorous,

traditional, formal, and refined, as well as spontaneous, immediate, bardic, irrational, trans-logical, open-ended, and ambiguous—all still apply, but in new combinations. Such hybridity is, of course, in itself no guarantee of excellence, and the decentralizing influences cited above make it harder to achieve a consensual judgment or even to maintain stable critical criteria; instead, these factors put more responsibility on individual readers to make their own assessments, which can, in turn, create stronger readers in that they must become more aware of and refine their own critical criteria."

Erik Anderson

"In recent years there's been a fair amount of traffic in textual hybridity—works that often operate in several genres or defy genre labels altogether. To be certain, this hybridity is not that of the American Hybrid anthology (edited by Cole Swensen and David St. John), which repurposes the term toward altogether separate ends (namely, the reconciliation of the academy with the avant-garde—already a fait accompli). In experimental circles at least, there's been either a marked fatigue with genre conventions or a sense that genres work well in collaboration."

Mark Wallace

Against Unity (2010)

"In literature, the hybrid distorts the normal unifying marks of many literary concepts. Genre, technique, tradition, the identifying marks of a movement or school: in the hybrid, all these things are subject to mismatching and deformation. Yet in many recent poetry anthologies, a seeming belief in the hybrid's impure multiplicity ends up being used as a way of reinforcing a pure singularity. Belief in unity seems to hang on tenaciously even when invoking a hybridity that on the surface seems meant to displace it."

Trashpo as Frenetic Romanticism: Vispo collabs by Jim Leftwich and Evan Damerow (Roanoke, Virginia, USA)

Posted by De Villo Sloan on August 27, 2015 at 3:30pm Send Message View Blog

Mail art by IUOMA member Jim Leftwich and Evan Damerow (Roanoke, Virginia, USA)

August 27, 2015 - This summer I received two large packages of mail art from visual poet Jim Leftwich in Roanoke, the first of which (chronologically) I am documenting in this blog. The vast majority of the pieces are collaborations between Jim Leftwich and Evan Damerow. (The exception is one very interesting asemic work at the end.) According to Facebook, Evan Damerow resides in New Zealand. His work was unknown to me before the arrival of this missive.

While Jim Leftwich seems inclined toward the prolific naturally, I attribute some of the outpouring of work this summer to the 2015 Marginal Arts Festival. The event seems to have been a great success and a perusal of the documentation will be rewarding, no doubt:

https://www.flickr.com/photos/textimagepoetry/sets/72157655774591286

The Anti-Brain Rot mail art call and exhibition also accompanied the festival, which occurred in July (2015). Here is some partial documentation of the entries via C. Mehrl Bennett (Columbus, Ohio, USA):

https://cmehrlbennett.wordpress.com/2015/07/15/the-anti-brain-rot-m...

Unless otherwise indicated, all the pieces shown here are Jim Leftwich-Evan Damerow collabs.

These Leftwich-Damerow collabs hold specific interest to the trashpoets and D-Kulters in the network, as Jim Leftwich is acknowledged as having created some of the earliest Trashpo (2005). These pieces (the current work shown here) use found material, have the organic structure so recognizable in most Trashpo and also show the anti-art stance and the On the Road spontaneity of Trashpo composition.

Trashpo is a form of visual poetry. (Many current practitioners are either unaware of or disregard this fact). The pieces documented here make abundant and innovative use of text, text-image associations and juxtapositions, cut up, disruption, asemics and other approaches that are related to poetry and the poetic as well as the tenets of Trashpo rather than mere collage. In short, they are excellent examples. The work transcends Trashpo in many ways yet still offers insights into Trashpo theory and practice for the working trashpoet.

A bonus in the package is the piece below: "Spirit Writing" by Jim Leftwich (1997), a work of historical significance because it was made so early in the context of the current thriving and burgeoning asemic movement. Jim Leftwich, however, and as many know, has reservations concerning the use of the term "asemic" and having his own work labeled as asemic writing. So I encourage you to consider the perspective of visual poetry here, although I believe the tide of history is very likely to identify Jim Leftwich as an asemic writer (among other designations):

A closer look:

Many thanks to Jim Leftwich and Evan Damerow!

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Delusions of Whiteness in the Avant-Garde Cathy Park Hong

The classic function of the avant-garde has been, according to Renato Poggioli, "not so much... . an aesthetic fact as a sociological one," interrogating the very role of art as an institution in a bourgeois society and seeking to collapse artistic praxis with daily life. Echoing this, Charles Bernstein has said, "I care most about poetry that disrupts business as usual, including literary business. I care most for poetry as dissent, including formal dissent; poetry that makes sounds possible to be heard that are not otherwise articulated." The spirit of the avant-garde has been revolt, making it all the more baffling that avant-garde poets and their scholars have—except for occasional inclusions—largely ignored major groundbreaking movements like the Black Arts Movement or the Harlem Renaissance. BAM, with its revolutionary zeal inspired by the Black Power movement, sought to upend Western cultural institutions, energize black communities, and develop languages and forms that rejected western-influenced craftsmanship. In her illuminating must-reed Renegade Poetics, the scholar and poet Evie Shockley writes, "Black Arts proposed to establish a new set of cultural reference points and standards that centered on 'the needs and aspirations' of African Americans." Amiri Baraka blended black nationalism with Dadaist linguistic disruption in his poetry and his raconteur misfit persona shared a similar showman's DNA with the likes of Filippo Marinetti, Tristan Tzara, and Andre Breton. Even BAM's much-criticized separatist agenda, to write exclusively for a black audience, is not so far off from the avant-garde's dictum not to assimilate into the majority, but stand apart. If we are to acknowledge that there are formal choices that define avant-garde poetry such as polyvocality, hybridity, collage, stream-of-conscious writing, and improvisation, these techniques were not only used but were actually first inaugurated by African American writers or they were America's early practitioners. Jean Toomer's Cane, written in 1923, is an uncategorizable cross-genre book that is wide-ranging in its experimentations with fragmentation, stream-of-consciousness, and surrealist wordplay. Before academic words like hybridity and heteroglossia became en voque, Harlem Renaissance socialist poet Claude McKay—whose work inspired key figures like Aimé Césaire and Leopold Senghor from the Negritude movement—experimented with Jamaican dialect and code-switching in his collection Constab Ballads. Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's visionary work is a pioneering example of conceptual writing. Known for her 1982 posthumously published cross-genre memoir Dictee, she was also a multi-disciplinary artist, dematerializing text through her video montages and performances, inspiring future digital artists with her hyper-textual methods. Many of these poets' reputations have long been battened under the banner of ethnic studies but are rarely regarded as core figures in experimental poetry. So while Dictee is considered as seminal as Tender Buttons among Asian American circles, it's still treated like a fringe classic in the avant-garde canon.

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two-seam variation velocity control without early pitcher to pitcher fastball effective dominant perceived baseball identical horseshoes grips relative sinker

cognitive two-seam variation velocity operational control without sneak early pitcher to emotive pitcher fastball resemblance effective dominant denotation perceived baseball pluralizing identical horseshoes transmitted grips relative semiotic sinker

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